

# **BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE**

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## **1. MAJOR OPTIONS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

Historically there have been three major models of church government : episcopalianism, presbyterianism, and congregationalism.

### **A) EPISCOPALIANISM**

Though various episcopal bodies will differ on important details, they all share the characteristic of having an episcopate (office of bishop) distinct from and superior to the officers of local churches. Episcopal government is thus, in some sense, hierarchical, with the bishop ordaining and governing the leaders (often called priests or rectors) of several local parish churches. The territory and churches over which the bishop rules is called a "diocese." In many episcopal denominations, an archbishop has authority over many (or all) the other bishops (see Figure 1). The Roman Catholic Church is perhaps the most well-known and straightforward episcopal system. The governments of the Eastern Orthodox churches are also episcopal in nature. Among Protestants, the Anglican Church, the Episcopalian Church in the United States, the United Methodist Church, and some Lutheran groups all practice versions of episcopalianism.

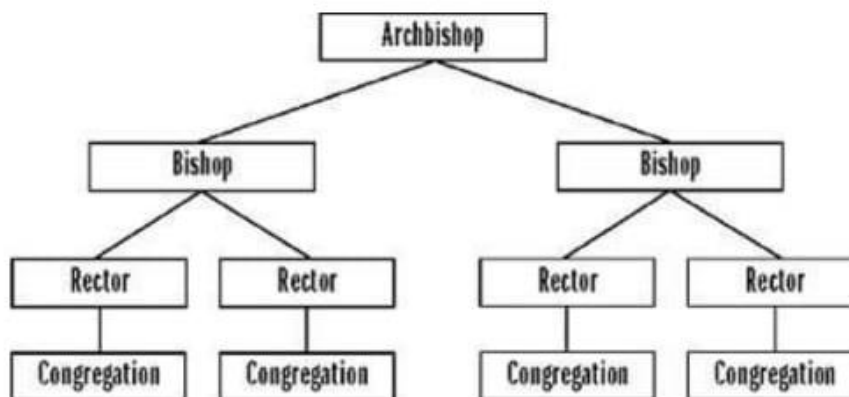


Figure 1

### **B) PRESBYTERIANISM**

This system can be said to be a "representative" form of church government (see Figure 2). In presbyterianism, the local church is ruled by a group of elders (called a "session" by most groups) who are chosen by the congregation. Members of the sessions from several local churches in a geographical region are also members of the presbytery which has ruling authority over their several churches. In turn, at least

some members of each presbytery are also members of a general assembly which governs the entire denominational body. In addition to this general structure, presbyterians also distinguish two types of elders. Some elders are ruling elders who provide leadership in setting policy and supervising various church ministries, but do not necessarily preach and teach. Teaching elders are given the responsibility to preach and teach in the church. There are many groups that practice presbyterianism, including the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Presbyterian Church in America, the Christian Reformed Church, and (somewhat more loosely) the Assemblies of God.

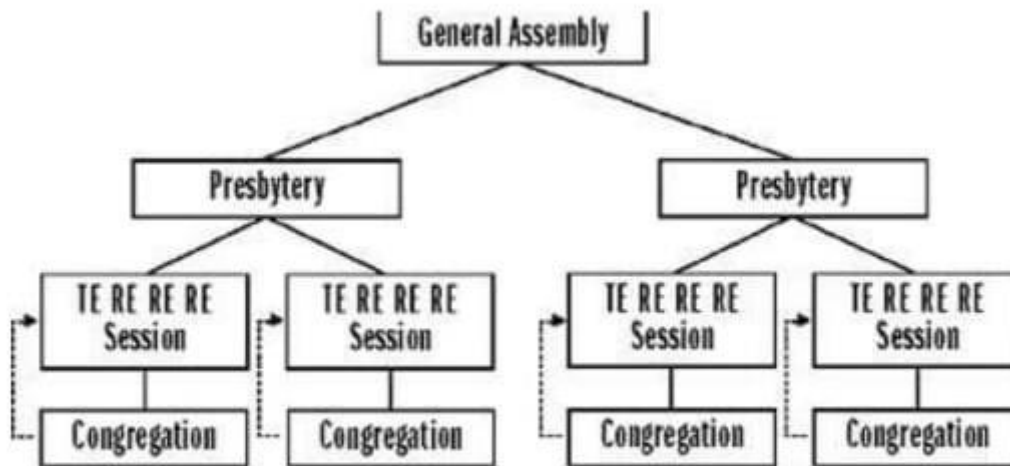


Figure 2

### **TE- Teaching Elder**

### **RE- Ruling Elder**

### **C) CONGREGATIONALISM**

What most clearly distinguishes the congregational system from the others is the doctrine of the autonomy of the local church (sometimes called independency). What is meant by this is that each local church, under the authority of Christ, governs itself. For congregationalists, no ecclesiastical authority exists outside or above the local assembly of believers. As one might expect, within these autonomous local churches is a great variety of internal structures and operations. In fact, Wayne Grudem has identified at least five distinct systems of internal congregational government. Not all of these are widely practiced, however. So, for

the purposes of this book, I have chosen to include what seem to me to be the two most significant and prominent of the congregationalist models.

### **Single-Elder Congregationalism.**

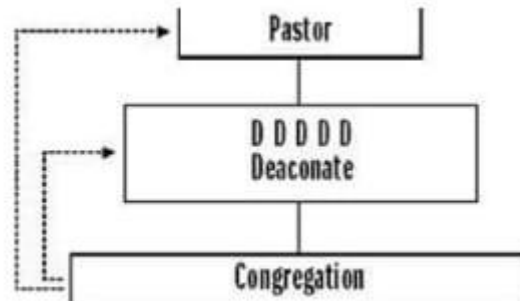


Figure 3

In this model—probably the most widely used—the local church is overseen by one elder or pastor chosen by the congregation and clearly distinguished as its spiritual leader. The single elder is usually assisted by (or in some cases supervised by) a group of deacons (see Figure 3). Under the term “single-elder congregationalism,” I also include those churches which have additional pastoral staff-persons (e.g., associate pastors, youth pastors, etc.), but which clearly set apart one pastor as the (senior) pastor.

### **Plural-Elder Congregationalism.**

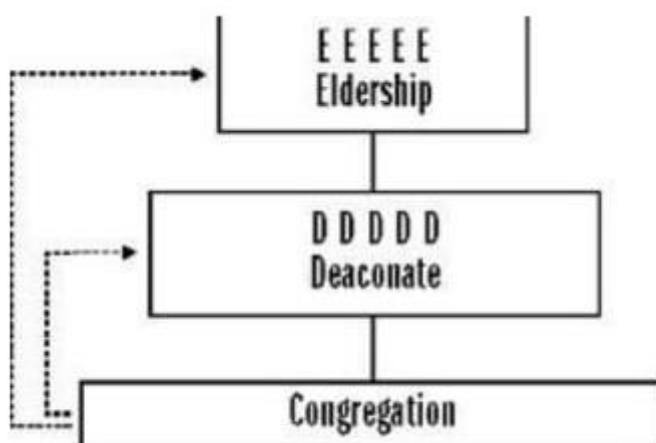


Figure 4

Similar to presbyterianism, those who follow this model see the local church as governed, by biblical design, by a plurality of elders or pastors (see Figure 4). It is distinguished from presbyterianism, however, in that (1) the elders have no authority or jurisdiction outside their own local church, and (2) there is no distinction made between ruling and teaching elders. For plural-elder

congregationalists, all elders/pastors both teach and rule. Plural-elder congregationalism is demarcated from single-elder congregationalism in that (1) a church with only one pastor is considered deficient, and (2) all the pastors/elders are considered to be equal in authority. The plural-elder congregationalist strongly rejects the idea of a senior or primary pastor in the church. Rather, the pastors of the local church work together as a team to lead and teach the church.

Congregationalism in its various forms is practiced by many denominations, including Southern Baptists, General Baptists, and all other Baptists, as well as Churches of Christ, Bible churches, and all other independent churches.

## **2. PLURAL AND SHARED LEADERSHIP**

The New Testament provides enough evidence that the pastoral oversight of the apostolic churches was a team effort—not the sole responsibility of one person. Our family of churches in India have only been exposed to a model of single person leading at all levels more in the lines of Vertical, Hierarchical or Pyramid structure- be it Geographic Sector Leader, Regional Leader, Church Leader. Even if there are multiple Evangelists in a church we have had a Lead Evangelist. At Church levels we have Sector Leader, Zone Leader, etc encouraging a Pyramid or Hierarchical structure.

What I am proposing is PLURAL LEADERSHIP practicing SHARED LEADERSHIP.

### **Plural Leadership**

Single Leader models were practiced in the Bible during the Monarchy. We all know how the Nation followed the Character of the King.

As the King went so the Nation went.

So why is the Singular Leader model preferred in our churches in India?

Our churches in India were all born through missionary vision and zeal of Singular Mission Leaders who were appointed Evangelists and Women's Ministry Leader mostly during this process of church Start-ups.

They were charismatic, visionary and passionate or to put it in our lingo – “fired up”. We have lifted up, appreciated, glorified and idealized Evangelist Leaders in our churches.

Their achievements in the mission fields were celebrated in conferences and shared widely for others to follow suit.

This kind of leader is a strong visionary with a dominant personality.

We have also seen the downfall of many leaders along with the churches they lead in last 35 years or so.

The pitfalls of this kind of leadership are many,

- On one side he has little to no accountability from his peers. Each person has *fatal flaw* and *blind spots* that gets perpetuated in the church if not held to accountability by peers. (Some are task oriented and others relationship oriented and they gather teams around them that go with their philosophies.)

- One the other hand he has to shoulder the responsibility of all the people he leads which is beyond his capacity.

And whenever the single leader falls, then the entire church also comes down with him since there is no clear replacement for him.

## **I PROPOSE THAT OUR INDIAN LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE HAVE A PLURAL LEADERSHIP WITH SHARED LEADERSHIP PRACTICES.**

First, I will expose the definitions and concept of Shared Leadership in modern organisations then we will go to the New Testament to understand what Jesus did in setting up the structure of the first century church.

### **Shared Leadership**

**Shared leadership** is a leadership style that broadly distributes leadership responsibility, such that people within a team or an organization lead each other. It has frequently been referred to as horizontal leadership, distributed leadership, collective leadership, collaborative leadership, and is most contrasted with more traditional "vertical" or "hierarchical" leadership that resides predominantly with an individual instead of a group.

Below are examples from researchers in this field defining Shared Leadership:

- Yukl (1989): "*Individual members of a team engaging in activities that influence the team and other team members.*"
- Pearce. and Sims (2001): "*leadership that emanates from members of teams, and not simply from the appointed leader.*"
- Pearce and Conger (2003): "*a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals and groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both.*" They also added that "this influence process often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence"
- Carson, Tesluck, and Marrone (2007): "*An emergent team property that results from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members.*"



- Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport, and Bergman (2012): "*Shared leadership occurs when two or more members engage in the leadership of the team in an effort to influence and direct fellow members to maximize team effectiveness.*"
- Hoch, J. E. (2013): "*Reflects a situation where multiple team members engage in leadership and is characterized by collaborative decision-making and shared responsibility for outcomes.*"

As Pearce, Manz and Sims (2009) summarize, all definitions of shared leadership consistently include a "process of influence" that is "built upon more than just downward influence on subordinates or followers by an appointed or elected leader." Nearly all concepts of shared leadership entail the practice of "*broadly sharing power and influence among a set of individuals rather than centralizing it in the hands of a single individual who acts in the clear role of a dominant superior.*"

Therefore, shared leadership is an emergent team property of mutual influence and shared responsibility among team members, whereby they lead each other toward goal achievement.

**It is important to distinguish shared leadership from team leadership because shared leadership describes how team members influence each other and share responsibility for tasks, rather than the concept of a team being led by a specific leader.**

Shared leadership occurs when a group of individuals lead each other to achieve successful outcomes (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007).

In a recent study of 62 teams across several organizations in Taiwan, Chiu and colleagues found that shared leadership was related to team task performance. They found that those teams who shared leadership gained leverage through harnessing the diverse knowledge, skills and ability of each team member (Chiu, Owens & Tesluk, 2016)

The research showed that those teams characterized by shared leadership had formal leaders who displayed **humility**, (for example by admitting to their own limitations) and were more willing to allow team members to take responsibility. In this way, team members embraced shared leadership (Chiu et al., 2016)

### **CORNERSTONES OF SHARED LEADERSHIP**

The concept of shared leadership focuses on the idea that tasks are shared through a team environment that relies on- (Carson, 2007)

- **A SHARED PURPOSE** -Understand, appreciate and focus on collective goals
- **SOCIAL SUPPORT**- Emotional support through encouragement and recognition of each team member's contribution, and
- **VOICE**- occurs when the team places value and importance on each member's contribution

### **Shortcomings of Shared Leadership**

Because decision-making is a shared process, it can take time for groups to make decisions compared to traditional leadership decision-making. It takes more time for team members to communicate and the building of relationships is a long-term process; however, these decisions tend to be more effective than rushed decision-making.

## **SHARED LEADERSHIP IN THE BIBLE**

Shared leadership is rooted in the Old Testament institution of the elders of Israel and in Jesus' founding of the apostolate.

Jesus did not appoint one man to lead His Church.

He personally appointed and trained twelve men.

Jesus Christ gave the Church plurality of leadership.

The Twelve comprised the first leadership council of the Church and jointly led and taught the first Christian community.

The Twelve provide a marvellous example of unity, humble brotherly love, and shared leadership structure.

Shared leadership is also evidenced by the Seven who were appointed to relieve the twelve apostles of the responsibility of dispensing funds to the church's widows (Acts 6:3-6). The Seven were the prototype of the later deacons. There is no indication that one of the Seven was chief and the others were his assistants. As a body of servants, they did their work on behalf of the church in Jerusalem. Based on all the evidence we have, the deacons, like the elders, formed a collective leadership council.

The New Testament reveals that the pastoral oversight of many of the first churches was committed to a plurality of elders.

This was true of the earliest Jewish Christian churches in Jerusalem, Judea, and neighbouring countries, as well as many of the first Gentile churches.

Note the following evidence:

- The elders of the church in Jerusalem united with the twelve apostles to deliberate over doctrinal controversy (Acts 15).
- Like the apostolate, the elders comprised a collective leadership body.
- James instructed the sick believer to "call for the elders [plural] of the church [singular]" (James 5:14).
- At the end of Paul's first missionary journey, he appointed a council of elders for each newly founded church: "And when they had appointed elders [plural] for them in every church [singular], having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed" (Acts 14:23). Note that here, as in James 5: 15, the term elder is plural and the word church is singular. Thus, each church had elders.

- When passing near the city of Ephesus during a hurried trip to Jerusalem, Paul summoned the “elders of the church,” not the Evangelist, to meet for a final farewell exhortation (Acts 20:17,28). The church in Ephesus was under the pastoral care of a council of elders. First Timothy 5:17 demonstrates beyond question that a plurality of elders led and taught the church in Ephesus: “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”
- When Paul wrote to the Christians at Philippi, he greeted “the overseers [plural] and deacons” (Phil. 1:1).
- At both the beginning and end of Paul’s ministry, he appointed (or instructed others to appoint) a plurality of elders to care for the churches he founded or established (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). According to the Titus 1:5 passage, Paul did not consider a church to be fully developed until it had functioning, qualified elders: “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you” (Titus 1:5).
- When writing to churches scattered throughout the five Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia in north-western Asia Minor (1 Peter 1:1), Peter exhorted the elders to pastor the flock (1 Peter 5:1). This indicates that Peter knew that the elder structure of government was standard practice in these churches.
- In addition to explicit statements regarding a plurality of elders, other examples of shared leadership exist throughout the New Testament (Acts 13:1; 15:35; 1 Cor. 16:15,16; 1 Thess. 5:12,13; Heb. 13:7,17,24).
- On the local church level, the New Testament plainly witnesses to a consistent pattern of shared pastoral leadership. **Therefore, leadership by a plurality of elders is a sound biblical practice.**

### **BENEFITS OF SHARED LEADERSHIP**

A leadership patterned on the New Testament model requires qualified elders.

Shared Leadership who must meet specific moral and spiritual qualifications before they serve (1 Tim. 3:1-7).

Elders must be publicly examined by the church as to their qualifications (1 Tim. 3:10).

They must be publicly installed into office (1 Tim. 5:22; Acts 14:23).

They must be motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do their work (Acts 20:28).

Finally, they must be acknowledged, loved, and honoured by the whole congregation. This honour given by the congregation includes the giving of financial support to elders who are uniquely gifted at preaching and teaching, which allows some elders to serve the church full or part time (1 Tim. 5:17,18).

Thus, a team of qualified, dedicated, Spirit-placed elders is not a passive, ineffective committee; it is an effective form of leadership structure that greatly benefits the church family.

### **A COUNCIL OF EQUALS**

Leadership by a council of elders is a form of government found in nearly every society of the ancient Near East. It was the fundamental government structure of the nation of Israel throughout its Old Testament history (Exodus 3:16; Ezra 10:8). For Israel, a tribal, patriarchal society, the eldership was as basic as the family.

So, when the New Testament records that Paul, a Jew who was thoroughly immersed in the Old Testament and Jewish culture, appointed elders for his newly founded churches (Acts 14:23), it means that he established a council of elders in each local church. By definition, the elder structure of government is a collective form of leadership in which each elder shares equally the position, authority, and responsibility of the office.

There are different names for this type of leadership structure. More formally it is called collective, corporate, or collegiate leadership. In contemporary terms it is referred to as multiple church leadership, plurality, shared leadership, or team leadership.

The opposite of collective leadership is unitary leadership, monarchical rule, or one-man leadership.

## **BENEFITS OF COUNCIL OF EQUALS**

- **BALANCING PEOPLES WEAKNESSES'**- For the single leader atop a pyramidal structure of organization the important balancing of their weaknesses and strengths normally does not occur. In a shared leadership structure, however, different members complement one another and balance one another's weaknesses. If one elder has a tendency to act too harshly with people, the others can temper his harshness. If some members fear confrontation with people, others can press for action. Elders who are more doctrinally oriented can sharpen those who are more outreach- or service-oriented, and the outreach- or service-minded elders can ignite the intellectually oriented members to more evangelism and service.

- **LIGHTENING THE WORKLOAD-** If the long hours, weighty responsibilities, and problems of shepherding a congregation of people are not enough to overwhelm a person, then dealing with people's sins and listening to seemingly endless complaints and bitter conflicts can crush a person.

Even the mighty Moses wilted to near death under the pressures of leading the people of Israel (Num. 11).

Certainly, every shepherd who has sought to do his duty according to Scripture has felt, at one time or another, like Moses.

To make matters worse, the single-leader system of leadership is often ruthlessly cruel and unfair to leaders. Many overworked leaders are alone and isolated, with the church board and congregation serving as a multitude of ringside critics.

This is one reason why there are so many "short-term" pastors in churches. Many other leaders stay in the same church but are ineffective because they suffer from severe battle fatigue.

Others develop a **Messiah complex** or become **Narcissistic** and start believing that they are indispensable for their churches to only harm themselves and the fellowship.

In a multiple-elder system of leadership, however, the heavy burdens of pastoral life are shared by a number of qualified, functioning, shepherd elders.

As Bruce Stabbert masterfully states, *“a team ministry provides pastors for each pastor, men from whom one can expect full encouragement and help.”*

Expressing the same idea in more poetic terms, King Solomon wrote, *“Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labour. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.*

*Furthermore, if two lies down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart” (Eccl. 4:9-12).*

Finally, plurality of leadership allows each shepherd elder to function primarily according to personal giftedness rather than being forced to do everything and then being criticized for not being multi-gifted.

- **PROVIDING ACCOUNTABILITY**

Because of our Christian beliefs in the reality of sin, Satan, and human depravity, we should understand well why people in positions of power are easily corrupted.

In fact, the better we understand the biblical doctrine of sin, the stronger our commitment to accountability will be.

The collective leadership of a biblical eldership provides a formal structure for genuine accountability and hence promote an environment of trust and transparency.

Only when there is genuine accountability between equals in leadership is there any hope for breaking down the horrible abuse of pastoral authority that plagues many churches.

Shared, brotherly leadership provides the much-needed restraint on pride, greed, and “playing God,”.

The concept of the leader as the lonely, trained professional—the sacred person over the church who can never really become a part of the congregation—is utterly unscriptural. Not only is this concept unscriptural, it is psychologically and spiritually unhealthy.

Shared leadership provides close accountability, genuine partnership, and peer relationships—the very things imperial pastors shrink from at all costs.

Shared leadership also provides the local church shepherd with accountability for his work. Church leaders (like all of us) can be lazy(demotivated), forgetful, fearful, or too busy to fulfil their responsibilities.

They need colleagues in ministry to whom they are answerable for their work. Left to ourselves, we do mainly what we want to do, not what we should do or what is best for others. This is especially true if we face tense, confrontational situations with erring members. Most people will avoid unpleasant confrontation at all costs.

Thus, church leaders need the loving encouragement and close accountability that shared leadership provides so that they will accomplish their duties promptly and responsibly.

### **THE HAZARDS OF SHARED LEADERSHIP**

Shared leadership in a church family can be painfully slow and terribly aggravating. The orientation of shared leadership requires a great deal of patience, persevering prayer, wisdom, self-control, humility, trust, love, and genuine respect for the gifts and perspectives of others in the body of Christ.

Because collegiality is slower and more difficult than unitary leadership, most pastors prefer to work alone or with a staff under them.

Shared leadership can also be an organizational sand trap of inaction if good principles of management, communication, and clear delineation of responsibilities are not implemented.

Since the eldership itself is a group, just as the congregation is, it requires organization or it will flounder in disorganization, undiscipline, and aimlessness.

The size of the eldership affects how the eldership will organize itself for most effective service.

An eldership comprising twenty-five men or more will, by necessity, need more structure and leadership than an eldership of two men. Despite these potential problems, the long-term benefits of shared leadership to the local church and the personal satisfaction of working for the Lord with a team of godly shepherds far outweigh the difficulties and weaknesses.

**WHAT IS NEEDED IS HUMILITY, HUMILITY, HUMILITY, TRAINING,**  
**TRAINING, TRAINING,**



## **FIRST AMONG EQUAL: HOW TO BE LEADERS AMONG LEADERS**

Failure to understand the concept of “first among equals” (or 1 Tim. 5: 17) has caused some elderships to be tragically ineffective in their pastoral care and leadership.

Although elders act jointly as a council and share equal authority and responsibility for the leadership of the church, all are not equal in their giftedness, biblical knowledge, leadership ability, experience, or dedication.

Therefore, those among the elders who are particularly gifted leaders and/or teachers will naturally stand out among the other elders as leaders and teachers within the leadership body.

This is what the Romans called *primus inter pares*, meaning “first among equals,” or *primi inter pares*, meaning “first ones among equals.”

The principle of “first among equals” is observed first in our Lord’s dealings with the twelve apostles.

Jesus chose twelve apostles, all of whom He empowered to preach and heal, but He singled out three for special attention—Peter, James, and John (“first ones among equals”).

Among the three, as well as among the Twelve, Peter stood out as the most prominent (“first among equals”).

Consider the following facts: - Among the twelve apostles, Peter, James, John, and sometimes Andrew are “first ones among equals.”

On key occasions Jesus chose only Peter, James, and John to accompany Him to witness His power, glory, and agony (Luke 8:51; 9:2-28; Mark 14:33).

- Among the three, as well as the Twelve, Peter is unquestionably first among his equals. In all four lists of the apostles’ names, Peter’s name is first (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13). Matthew actually refers to Peter as “the first”(Matt. 10:2). By calling Peter “the first,” Matthew means “first among his equals.”

We must not, in reaction to Roman Catholicism’s mistaken elevation of Peter, underestimate Peter’s outstanding leadership among the Twelve. The Gospel writers don’t.

- In all four Gospels, Peter is indisputably the prominent figure among the Twelve. Outside of Jesus, Peter is mentioned most often as speaking and acting. If you doubt this, look up the name Peter in a Bible concordance, then look up the names of the

other apostles. You will immediately see Peter's prominence among the Twelve in the four Gospels and in Acts.

\* Jesus charged Peter to "strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32). Jesus acknowledged Peter as first among his brothers, the natural leader and motivator. He knew that they would need Peter's leadership to help them through the dark days immediately following their Lord's departure.

\* The book of Acts richly demonstrates Peter's leadership. Among the Twelve who jointly shared the leadership of the first church (Acts 2: 14,42; 42-33,35; 5:12,18,25,29,42; 6:2-6; 8: 14; 9:27; 15:22- 29), Peter is the chief spokesman and natural leader throughout the first twelve chapters of Acts (Acts 1:15; 2:14; 3:1 ; 4:8; 5:3; 5:15,29; 8:14-24; 9:32-11:18; 1:2; 15:7-11; Gal. 2:7- 14). Some scholars even divide the book of Acts according to its two central figures: the acts of Peter (Acts 1-12) and the acts of Paul (Acts 13-28). Many sound, evangelical Bible commentators interpret Christ's statement in Matthew 16:18 to mean that Peter is the rock and that upon him Christ would build His Church (but not exclusively upon him according to other passages such as Ephesians 2:20). They view the book of Acts as the record of that promise fulfilled (especially Acts 10:21-11:2-18).

\* In Paul's letter to the Galatians, Paul speaks of James, Peter, and John as the acknowledged "pillars" of the church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9; see also Gal. 2:7,8).

\* As the natural leader, the chief speaker, the man of action, Peter challenged, energized, strengthened, and ignited the group. Without Peter, the group would have been less effective. When surrounded by eleven other apostles who were his equals, Peter became stronger, more balanced, and was protected from his impetuous nature and his fears. In spite of his outstanding leadership and speaking ability, Peter possessed no legal or official rank or title above the other eleven. They were not his subordinates. They were not his STAFF or team of assistants. He wasn't the apostles' "senior pastor" OR "lead evangelist" or "lead apostle".

Peter was simply first among his equals, and that by our Lord's own approval.

- The "first among equals" leadership relationship can also be observed among the Seven who were chosen to relieve the apostles in Acts 6. Philip and Stephen stood out as prominent figures among the five other brothers (Acts 6:8-7:60; 8:4-40; 21:8). Yet, as far as the account records, the two held no special title or status above the others.

- The concept of “first among equals” is further evidenced by the relationship of Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. Paul and Barnabas were both apostles (Acts 13:1-3; 14:4; 15:36-39; 1 Cor. 9:1-6), yet Paul was first between the two because he was “the chief speaker” and dynamic leader (Acts 13: 13; 14:12). Although Paul was plainly the more gifted of the two apostles, he held no formal ranking over Barnabas; they laboured as partners in the work of the gospel.
- A similar relationship seems to have existed between Paul and Silas, who was also an apostle (1 Thess. 2:6).
- Finally, the “first among equals” concept is evidenced by the way in which congregations are to honour their elders. Paul wrote specific instructions concerning elders to the church in Ephesus: “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,’ and ‘The labourer is worthy of his wages’” (1 Tim. 5:17,18).
- All elders must be able to teach the Word, but not all desire to work fully at preaching and teaching. Those who are gifted in teaching and spend the time to do so should be properly acknowledged by the local church. They should receive double honour.
- This doesn’t mean, however, that elders who are first among their equals do all the thinking and decision-making for the group, or that they are the lead elder while the others are merely elders. To call one elder “lead elder” and the rest “elders” or one elder “the clergyman” and the rest “lay elders” is to act without biblical precedence. To do so will not result in a biblical eldership. It will, at least in practice, create a separate, superior office over the eldership, just as was done in the early second century when the division between “the overseer” and “elders” occurred.
- The advantage of the principle of “first among equals” is that it allows for functional, gift-based diversity within the eldership team without creating an official, superior office over fellow elders.
- Just as the leading apostles, such as Peter and John, bore no special title or formal distinctions from the other apostles, elders who receive double honour

form no official class or receive no special title. **The differences among the elders are functional, not formal.**

- Leaders and Elders who work hard in teaching and preaching should be financially supported (1 Tim 5:17-18).

When a man has to support himself through daily employment, there is little time left for serious study, outreach, or administrative duties.

I'm not suggesting for a moment that self-supporting, or what are sometimes called "tentmaking elders," are not effective teachers or leaders. They most assuredly are, but they have limited time and energy to devote to the task.

**DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE TENTMAKING LEADERS NOR OVERESTIMATE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.**

Full- and/or part-time elders significantly enhance the effectiveness and work output of the eldership.

God has ordained the local church to grow, be strengthened, and be protected from false doctrine through the preaching and teaching of the Word.

So, we must not neglect to care for those who labour in the Word.

Furthermore, "first among equals" provides desperately needed protection from the all-too-common pitfalls of egoism, greed, personality imbalance, and unholy ambition to which highly gifted leaders and teachers may succumb.

An exceptionally gifted leader or teacher can lead and teach with all his zeal and might, as the Scripture commands a leader and teacher to do (Rom. 12:7,8), and yet be held accountable to fellow leaders and teachers.

The Christian leader or teacher who refuses brotherly accountability is self-deceived and is headed for self-destruction.

The Christian leader who really knows his Bible and has an honest view of his sinfulness and weaknesses understands his undeniable need for the checks and balances provided by fellow colleagues.

**Only dictators fear accountability from godly colleagues.**

### **Solutions to Common Pitfalls of "First Among Equals"**

There are dangers in every form of government or leadership structure administered by sinful humans, and the principle of "first among equals" is no exception.

There is the very real danger that the elders will relinquish their God-given responsibilities for the spiritual care of the church to one or two exceptionally gifted men.

This danger will always exist because people tend to adulate themselves and are selfish and lazy by nature, particularly when it comes to spiritual matters, and are more than eager to pay others to do their work with complete misapplication of delegation.

But once that happens, the elders are reduced to adviser status and the "first among equals" concept becomes "first without equals."

Biblical eldership then vanishes.

Another danger is that the principle of "first among equals" will be abused by a dominating, controlling leader who are task oriented and use people as a means to their ends and ambitions.

Such a leader may monopolize the church's key ministries, seek his own way, and force out all dissent and disagreement.

Controlling leaders don't want colleagues; they want "yes men," "rubber stamps," and loyal subjects.

Such dangers can be avoided, however if there is Qualified Leadership in place.

### 3. QUALIFIED LEADERSHIP

The local church and its leaders must be serious about the biblical requirements for Elders and Evangelists.

A “self-willed” man, “lording it over” others, does not qualify to be a church leader according to the New Testament and should be removed from office (Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:3).

Also, non-functioning elders, mere figureheads, are not qualified to serve as elders and should be removed from office (1 Peter 5:2).

If the local church is not solidly committed to having biblically qualified elders, it will find itself powerless to act against tyrants or idle shepherds (***who love to give suggestions or opinions or criticisms but not share shepherding or providing or being part of the solution.***)

- Elders need to work closely together as a united team, building trust and growing together. The elders’ meetings, therefore, are an extremely important time for ministering to one another as well as for doing business. One of the secrets to a successful eldership is regular, effective meetings that include a major portion of time devoted to labouring together in prayer (Acts 6:4). Board elders don’t labour in prayer together, but spiritual shepherds cannot do otherwise. To adapt an old cliché, “elders who pray together stay together.”
- In addition to the elders’ work, times of relaxed fellowship are also necessary for building friendship, teamwork, and trust. The purpose is to build the bonds of love which should be evident to the congregation and which will survive the inevitable strains which responsibility imposes in an imperfect world.”
- Elders need to be in the business of building up one another’s lives. Older, more experienced elders need to mentor younger elders. Elders need to recommend times of sabbatical rest for weary colleagues.
- Elders need to set up ongoing educational programs for themselves.
- Elders need to take practical steps toward building an effective, spiritually minded eldership that involves all the elders who share the responsibility of shepherding God’s flock.

A biblical model of leadership and eldership requires biblically qualified leaders and elders.

The offices of God's Church are not honorary positions bestowed on individuals who have attended church faithfully or who are senior in years.

Nor are they board positions to be filled by good friends, rich donors, or charismatic personalities.

The church offices, evangelist, eldership and deaconship, are open to all who meet the apostolic, biblical requirements.

Even at this time we cannot have people who are Elder type or Deacon type or some type of leaders. Any form of compromise will continue to stunt the church.

If this is God's church then these qualified brothers and sisters are there in the congregation. Go and Find them, train them, appoint them. And continue to Train them.

- ANYONE WHO ASPIRES TO LEAD A CHURCH OR SERVE AS A DEACON MUST MEET THE QUALIFICATIONS IN 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13, TITUS 1:6-9, 1 PETER 5:1-3
- To the troubled church in Ephesus, Paul insists that a properly constituted Christian church (1 Tim. 3:14,15) must have qualified, approved elders.
- Paul also insists that prospective elders and deacons be publicly examined in light of the stated list of qualifications. (1 Tim 3:10)
- When directing Titus in how to organize churches on the island of Crete, Paul reminds Titus to appoint only morally and spiritually qualified men to be elders. By stating elder qualifications in a letter, Paul establishes a public list to guide the local church in its choice of elders and to empower it to hold its elders accountable (Titus 1:5-9).
- When writing to churches scattered throughout north-western Asia Minor, Peter speaks of the kind of men who should be elders. He exhorts the elders to shepherd the flock "not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2,3).
- Such qualifications are not required of all teachers or evangelists. One may be gifted as an evangelist and be used of God in that capacity, yet be unqualified to be an elder.

- An elder must be of irreproachable moral character and capable in the use of Scripture because he is “God’s steward,” that is, God’s household manager (Titus 1 :7). An elder is entrusted with God’s dearest and most costly possessions, His children. He thus holds a position of solemn authority and trust. He acts on behalf of God’s interests. No earthly monarch would dare think of hiring an immoral or incapable person to manage his estate. Nor would parents think of entrusting their children or family finances to an untrustworthy or incompetent person. So, too, the High and Holy One will not have an unfit, unqualified steward caring for His precious children.
- As stewards of God’s household, elders have access to people’s homes and the most intimate details of their lives. They have access to the people who are most vulnerable to deception or abuse. They also have the greatest influence over the doctrinal direction of the church. Therefore, church elders must be men who are well-known by the community, have proven integrity, and are doctrinally sound.
- Local church elders are to be living examples for the people to follow (1 Peter 5:3). They are to model the character and conduct that God desires for all His children. Since God calls His people to “be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (Phil. 2:15), it is necessary that those who lead His people be morally above reproach and model godly living.

As Hosea said, ‘Like people, like priest’ (Hosea 4:9).

Because people are like sheep, shepherd elders have an extraordinarily powerful impact on the behaviour, attitudes, and thinking of the people:

- If the elders have a contentious spirit, the people will inevitably become contentious (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7).
- If the elders are inhospitable, the people will be unfriendly and cold (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8).
- If the elders love money, the people will become lovers of money (1 Tim. 3:3).
- If the elders are not sensible, balanced, and self-controlled, their judgment will be characterized by ugly extremes, which will cause the people to be extreme and unbalanced (1 Tim. 3:1,2; Titus 1:8).



- If the elders are not faithful, one-woman husbands, they will subtly encourage others to be unfaithful (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6).
- If the elders do not faithfully hold to the authority of the Word, the people will not hold to it (Titus 1:9).
- Much of the weakness and waywardness of our churches today is due directly to our failure to require that church shepherds meet God's standards for office.
- If we want our local churches to be spiritually fit, then we must require our shepherds to be spiritually fit.
- Biblical qualifications protect the church from incompetent or morally unfit leaders.
- Some people push themselves into positions of church leadership to satisfy their unholy egos.
- Others are sadly deceived about their own ability and character.
- And some are evildoers who are motivated by Satan to infiltrate and ruin churches.
- The public, objective, God-given qualifications for church leadership protect the congregation from such unfit people.
- Today more than ever we need men of Christ-like character to be in spiritual leadership.
- The best laws and constitutions are impotent without men who are "just," "devout," "sensible, self—controlled," "forbearing," "uncontentious," and faithful to sound doctrine.
- Let us, then, heed the warning of the late author and Christian apologist Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984) who writes, *"The church has no right to diminish these standards for the officers of the Church, nor does it have any right to elevate any other as though they are then equal to these which are commanded by God himself. These and only these stand as absolute."*

## **ELDERS QUALIFICATIONS (1 TIM 3:1-7 TITUS 1:6-9, 1 PETER 5:2-3)**

### **Personality and character qualities:**

- Temperate
- Self-controlled
- Hospitable
- Disciplined
- Not violent, but gentle
- Not quarrelsome
- Not overbearing
- Not quick-tempered

### **Spiritual qualities:**

- Not a recent convert
- Loves what is good
- Holy
- Upright

### **Reputation:**

- Good reputation with outsiders (or else he may fall into disgrace)
- Respectable
- Above reproach
- Blameless
- Not given to drunkenness
- Not a lover of money
- Not pursuing dishonest gain

### **Teaching skills:**

- Able to teach
- Holds firmly to the trustworthy message (thus able to encourage others by sound doctrine and to refute those who oppose it)

### **Leadership skills (as demonstrated by his family):**

- Husband of but one wife
- Manages his own family well
- Sees that his children obey him with proper respect
- His children believe, and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

**WIVES OF ELDERS (1 TIM 3:11)**

- Women worthy of respect,
- not malicious talkers
- temperate
- trustworthy in everything

## **EVANGELISTS**

THE WORD EVANGELIST IS FOUND IN 3 PLACES ACTS 21:8; EPH 4:11; 2 TIM 4:5

### **WORK OR ROLE OF AN EVANGELIST**

#### **1 & 2 TIMOTHY, TITUS**

**1 Timothy 1:3-4:** Command people teaching false doctrines to stop.

**1 Timothy 1:18-19:** Follow Paul's instructions in order to keep faith and a good conscience, unlike those who have shipwrecked their faith.

**1 Timothy 2:1-2:** Follow Paul's urging regarding the content and direction of prayers.

**1 Timothy 2:8-15:** Instructions for both men and women in their worship and life roles.

**1 Timothy 3:1-15:** Instructions regarding the qualifications of elders, deacons and wives.

**1 Timothy 4:1-7:** Point out to the brothers the truth, as contrasted to the Gnostic teachings of people who are following demons, and train yourself to be godly.

**1 Timothy 4:11-16:** Command, teach, set an example in life and doctrine, and devote yourself to public reading of Scripture and to preaching and teaching.

**1 Timothy 5:1-2:** How to treat older men and women, and younger men and women in righteous ways.

**1 Timothy 5:3-16:** How widows should be cared for by their family and by the church.

**1 Timothy 5:17-22:** How to treat elders of the church, in both good and challenging circumstances.

**1 Timothy 6:11-16:** Flee from materialism and pursue righteous living, fighting the good fight of faith.

**1 Timothy 6:17-19:** Command the rich how to view and use their money for God.

**1 Timothy 6:20-21:** Guard the gospel and avoid godless talk and false teachings.

**2 Timothy 1:6-8:** Fan into flame God's gift in order to avoid timidity and fear and to embrace the gospel and the suffering that goes with it.

**2 Timothy 1:13-14:** Keep the pattern of sound teaching as heard from Paul, and guard that with which you have been entrusted, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

**2 Timothy 2:1-7:** Be strong in grace, and train reliable men to teach others, while remaining focused on the task and working hard at it.

**2 Timothy 2:8-9:** Remember Christ as the foundation of the gospel.

**2 Timothy 2:14-16:** Remind and warn the people about teaching false doctrines and arguing, presenting yourself as one who correctly handles the word of truth.

**2 Timothy 2:22-26:** Flee the sins of youth and pursue righteous living, while avoiding arguments and quarrels by responding to critics righteously and calmly.

**2 Timothy 3:14-15:** Continue in the truths of the Scripture learned at a young age, for they lead to salvation through faith in Christ.

**2 Timothy 4:1-5:** Preach the Word; correct, rebuke and encourage, with patience and careful teaching, for men will turn away from the truth to embrace myths.

**Titus 1:5-9:** Straighten out what is unfinished and appoint elders in every town.

**Titus 1:13-14:** Rebuke those who espouse false doctrines, especially Jewish myths.

**Titus 2:1-6:** Teach sound doctrine; teach older men and women and young men how to live righteous lives.

**Titus 2:7-8:** Set an example and teach with integrity and seriousness.

**Titus 2:9-10:** Teach slaves how to respond to their masters, thus making the teaching about God attractive.

**Titus 2:15-3:2:** Teach, encourage and rebuke with all authority, and remind the people how to respond righteously toward authorities and all men.

**Titus 3:8:** Stress how believers are to devote themselves to doing good.

**Titus 3:9-11:** Avoid Jewish controversies and deal strongly with people who are divisive.

## **WHO SHOULD LEAD THE CHURCH OR THE PLURAL LEADERSHIP?**

Depending on the personality of the elders, it is possible that the church could become less visionary and evangelistic.

The church needs a prophetic voice to lead it—the kind of voice that an evangelist is usually best equipped to provide.

Whatever you call the person who most often occupies the pulpit, his role must include helping the church to bring others to Christ, however that is best accomplished.

Without question, he has to be an effective speaker and good motivator.

The average elder is simply not equipped to lead large churches.

But an Evangelist who lacks overseer qualifications and is overbearing, unyielding and controlling will leave behind a battered, bitter and abused church.

**Titus 1:7**.-- “not overbearing.” The word in Greek is *authadēs*, which carries the meaning “self-pleasing.” The NASB translates it as “self-willed.” The Greek term is based on two other terms, *autos*, meaning self, and *hedone*, meaning pleasing. Perhaps it is obvious that *hedone* is the root for our English word “hedonism.” *Authadēs* is found only here and in 2 Peter 2:10, where the NIV translates it as “arrogant,” while the NASB sticks to the term “self-willed.” But notice in the context of 2 Peter 2:10 what the arrogant or self-willed person does: “This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings.” Being self-willed is obviously a very dangerous characteristic. How does a self-willed person act, and why does this quality disqualify him from serving as an leader? Stated simply, he is inflexible and will fight tooth and nail to get his way. He will often also have a temper problem, although he sometimes is characterized by a relatively quiet stubbornness. He cannot be a team player, and should never be put in any type of leadership group. Don’t ever appoint anyone to any leadership role who even tends in this direction, and if you already have, remove them. All leaders have strong opinions; how they handle their opinions is the ultimate issue.

**EVANGELISTS WITH ELDERS QUALIFICATION CAPABLE OF LEADING THE CHARGE ARE THE BEST POSSIBLE LEADERSHIP AS THEY ARE PROPHETIC FROM THE PULPIT, MISSIONARY AND ABOVE REPROACH IN THEIR PERSONAL LIFE AND PUBLIC LIFE.**

## **WHOM DO WE CHOOSE FOR EVANGELIST OR WML TRAINING/ INTERNSHIPS?**

- **STRONG DESIRE** (1 TIM 3:1)—NOT HIRED HANDS (JOHN 10:12) WHOSE DESIRE HAS VANED, AND DUTY HAS REPLACED DESIRE.
- **SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL STABILITY AND MATURITY- POSSESSING FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT(GALATIANS 5:22-25).**
- **SHARED LEADERSHIP ETHICS-** CONSISTENTLY OPEN AND HONEST, FLEXIBLE IN DECISION MAKING, NOT OVERBEARING/ SELF WILLED/ UNYIELDING.
- **GREAT EXAMPLES TO THE FLOCK THEY LEAD**
  - High level of spirituality.
  - A strong, observable work ethic. (Not lazy, listless and procrastinator)
  - Genuine love for people, shown by mixing and mingling with lots of people in lots of different settings.
  - Strong family dynamics within their own family—in both marriage and parenting.
  - Evangelistic in heart and in practice.
  - Proficient in administration and organization.
  - Educated sufficiently in Bible, and in general (which makes them relatable to different kinds of people). Should have a proficiency in exegeting and properly explaining scriptures.
  - Developed people skills—they know how to build relationships, resolve issues between people, and generally just “pull people in” relationally.
  - A “gift” of leadership, which shows up in the following ways:
    - Good communicator in public and in private—direct enough and sensitive enough to be both understood and trusted.
    - Strength of character and personality—their strength of convictions must clearly outweigh any tendencies to be sentimental, be a people-pleaser, or avoid conflict.
    - Motivational and inspirational—they “connect” when they are speaking to people individually and collectively. They are easy to listen to and can hold the attention of an audience well.

- They are motivated by God's spirit which is sensed in many ways by those whom they lead.
- They must noticeably affect the atmosphere of any group they are in, making it more faithful and more exciting.
- Not to leave them in Internships for more than 2 years as they lose their opportunities to pursue other career options.



## **DEACONS AND THEIR QUALIFICATIONS**

The deacon role is closely connected with that of the elder—that deacons support the elders by assuming tasks that take pressure off them.

If we adopt that connection, then deacons are to help the elders in certain areas much as the elders are to help the evangelists in certain other areas.

We have a perfect example of this principle in Acts 6, where the Seven were chosen to serve the widows, in order to offload this task from the apostles.

Teamwork and load-sharing among leaders is vital and explains why the church must have leaders serving in a variety of roles.

## **DEACONS QUALIFICATIONS**

### **1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13**

#### **Mentioned for both Elders and Deacons**

- Respectable (vv. 2, 8)
- Not indulging in much wine (vv. 3, 8)
- Not a lover of money (vv. 3, 8)
- Above reproach (vv. 2, 10)
- Husband of but one wife (vv. 2, 12)
- Managing children and household well (vv. 4, 12)
- Encouragement to serve (vv. 1, 13)

#### **Mentioned of Elders but not deacons:**

- Able to teach (v. 2)
- Hospitable (v. 2)
- Not a recent convert (v. 6)

#### **Mentioned of deacons but not Elders:**

- Sincere (literally, not double-tongued—v. 8)
- Clear conscience (v. 9)
- Must first be tested (v. 10)

#### **Qualifications of a deacon's wife (and perhaps the wife of an elder), or of a deaconess:**

- Worthy of respect (v. 11)
- Not malicious talkers (v. 11)
- Temperate (v. 11)

- Trustworthy in everything (v. 11)

The deacon must also have the spiritual gifts commensurate with the specific tasks for which he is chosen.

## **TEACHERS AND THEIR QUALIFICATIONS**

**HEBREWS 5:12**: any mature Christian should be a teacher on some level

**ROMANS 12:7**: Teaching is a gift.

**JAMES 3:1-2** Gifted teachers who become recognized in any leadership role are warned of a stricter judgment, which implies a serious responsibility that accompanies the role.

**EPH 4:11**: the terms “pastors”/“elders” and “teachers” are closely connected, and may refer to dual aspects of the same shepherding role. A single definite article in Greek links the two terms, and thus the phrase may be describing a single category of leader—a pastor/teacher.

Anyone who is given the role of TEACHING in the Church should have some shepherding responsibility too- either a Family Group, or a larger ministry.

They have the gift of discernment, asking questions and if they are not actively involved in shepherding ministry without any accountability for care giving and growing the church they end up becoming critics, opinion makers and false teachers.

Beware of promoting this kind of Teaching Ministry were the Teacher who has no shepherding responsibility and accountability in the church is tasked with teaching.

## **A WORD ABOUT CHOOSING LEADERS WHO ARE "FULL OF THE SPIRIT and WISDOM"**

**Acts 6:3( NIV):** "Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them"

### **CHOOSE/SELECT**

"Select" or "Choose" is the Greek *episkeptomai* from a root which "denotes the activity of looking at or paying attention to a person or thing". The verb can mean, depending on the context, "to observe, review, superintend, watch over, inspect, examine, care for, and select" (i.e., after examination). This is clearly the opposite of "grabbing" someone who is spiritually not qualified, simply to fill a need.

It becomes evident that this word and its active form, *episkopeo*, "to oversee" became important in the selection of these first servants and in the selection of the title, *episkopos*, "overseers" for the leaders of the church.

SO, **CHOOSE OR SELECT CAREFULLY.**

### **KNOWN**

*known*- Greek *Martureo* meaning to be a witness, to bear witness, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration

- a. to give (not to keep back) testimony
- b. to utter honourable testimony, give a good report
- c. conjure, implore

KJV translates it as "men of Honest Report"

NASB has men of "good reputation"

NLT has men who are "well respected".

It is necessary that this sort of officers in the church should be men "of honest report"; that have a good testimony both from within the church and without, of their honesty and fidelity; since they are entrusted with the church's stock, and have the care of many devolved upon them: so the collectors of alms among the Jews were to

be men , "known and faithful" ; men of known probity and integrity: and, besides this good and honest report they were to have from others.

Their testimony is evident to everyone in the congregation. Their life witnessed the next two qualities.

Men like this are:

**1. Full of Spirit** means filled with the Fruit of the Spirit.

**2. Full of Wisdom** those who are soaked in the Word of God.

These two are the tap root of spiritual growth, maturity and leadership.

For any level of leadership- Elders, Evangelist, Deacons, Teachers it is indispensable that they be Spirit Filled and Word filled leaders.

So many times, it is the gifts or talents or charisma or worldly achievements that blind us to choose someone rather than the Fruit of the Spirit. Remember the term "sharp" being used actively even when someone is studying the Bible, he or she was a PFI. Or since they are very successful and recognised in their work places they should be leading the churches.

Men can be successful because of their talent and hard work.

We often see men and women who have good reputations, religious, moral, likable, talented and genuinely nice guys, but this can be the product of their own activity produced from their own neurotic needs like the desire for recognition, position, power, applause, or even to soothe a guilty conscience.

So, there are talents (in born and nurtured), there are gifts of the spirit and then there is the fruit of the Spirit.

Talents everyone has or doesn't have, even the non-Christians have it.

### **Gifts of the Spirit are the following**

Artistic Gifts-Exodus 31:3; 35:31  
 Contentment -Ecclesiastes 3:13; 5:19  
 Prophecy – Romans 12:6  
 Serving- Romans 12:7  
 Teaching- Romans 12:7  
 Encouraging- Romans 12:8  
 Contributing- Romans 12:8  
 Leadership- Romans 12:8  
 Showing mercy- Romans 12:8  
 Celibacy- 1 Cor 7:7  
 Message of Wisdom- 1 Corinthians 12:8  
 Message of Knowledge- 1 Corinthians  
 12:8

Faith- 1 Corinthians 12:9  
 Healing- 2 Corinthians 12:9  
 Miraculous Powers- 1 Corinthians 12:10  
 Distinguishing Spirits- 1 Corinthians  
 12:10  
 Languages – 1 Corinthians 12:10  
 Translation- 1 Corinthians 12:10  
 Apostleship- 1 Corinthians 12:28  
 Administration-1 Corinthians 12:28  
 Evangelist-Ephesians 4:11  
 Shepherding-Ephesians 4:11  
 Teaching- Ephesians 4:11  
 Hospitality-1 Peter 4:9

**Everyone baptized has the Holy Spirit but only those who are filled with the Spirit and Remain in Christ (John 15:4) have the Fruit of the Spirit.**

Leaders who are characterised as Full of the Spirit will be like those described in

### **Galatians 5:22-25**

*<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

And not like the ones in Vs **19-22,26**

*<sup>19</sup> The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.*

**FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**

LOVE  
 JOY  
 PEACE  
 FORBEARANCE  
 KINDNESS  
 GOODNESS  
 FAITHFULNESS  
 GENTLENESS  
 SELF-CONTROL

**FRUIT OF THE FLESH**

SEXUAL IMMORALITY  
 IMPURITY  
 DEBAUCHERY  
 IDOLATORY  
 WITCHCRAFT  
 HATRED DISCORD  
 JEALOUSY  
 FITS OF RAGE  
 SELFISH AMBITION  
 DISSENSIONS  
 FACTIONS  
 ENVY  
 DRUNKENNESS  
 ORGIES  
 CONCEITED  
 PROVOKING

These above scriptures were spoken of brothers and sisters in the church.

By their fruit you would recognise them (**Matt 7:15-20**) whether they are of the Spirit or of the Flesh, whether they are true or False prophets (**Matt 7:15**)

So, beware a leadership that is gifted but is led by the Flesh and not the Spirit of God.

God gives his people gifts to be used in the church for common good. Those who are gifted if they are not in the Spirit you will recognise them by their fruit.

Remember the church in Corinth- an extremely gifted church and yet they were tearing each other apart displaying fleshly pursuits- immorality, idolatry, envy, jealousy, factions, divisions, dissensions.

But God wants only those in places of leadership and responsibility who are controlled and led by His Spirit (**Galatians 5:18; Romans 8:14**), because only these are in

hearing distance of His voice; only those with the capacity to care for others with the heart of God.

Such are His selection and such must be the criterion for our selection.

Those we select for leadership and places of responsibility should give unmistakable evidence of the power of Spirit in their lives, i.e., His Fruit in attitude, expression, and action.

**They produce fruit that will last (John 15:16) and fruit that is to God's glory (not their own)(John 15:8).**

### **Leaders who are full of wisdom**

Wisdom is *Sophia*, which includes two things:

- 1) Content, the wisdom of the Word, Bible Truth
- 2) The wise use or application of truth to the details of one's life. This means the practical application of the Word so that it results in biblical and Christ-like change. ( **2 Tim 3:16-17**- Man of God who is thoroughly equipped)
- 3) Foundation of all their decisions is ruled by the Word of God.

**SO DO NOT SHORT CIRCUIT SELECTION OF MEN OF GOOD REPUTE, FULL OF SPIRIT AND WISDOM FOR ANY LEADERSHIP OR SERVICE ROLE.**



#### **4. SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

The conceptual and structural changes that occurred during the early centuries lead to Christianity, the humblest of all faiths, degenerating into the most power-hungry and hierarchical religion on the face of the earth.

After the emperor Constantine elevated Christianity to the status of a state religion in AD. 312, the once-persecuted faith became a fierce persecutor of all its opposition. An unscriptural clerical and priestly caste that was consumed by the quest for power, position, and authority arose.

Even Roman emperors had a guiding hand in the development of Christian churches. The pristine character of the New Testament church community was lost.

Love, humility, and servanthood are pivotal to authentic Christian leadership and the inner life of the Christian community, however, let us briefly survey our Master's teaching on the subject.

1. **MATTHEW 11:29**: JESUS WAS GENTLE AND HUMBLE. But the Controlling and Proud use people to satisfy their fat egos. But Jesus is refreshingly different. He truly loves people, selflessly serving and giving His life for them. He expects His followers—especially the elders who lead His people—to be humble and gentle like Himself.
2. **MARK 9:33-35**: HUMBLE SERVANTS OF ALL. Jesus declared that true greatness is not achieved by striving for prominence over others or by grasping for power, but by exhibiting a humble, self-effacing attitude of service to all—even to the lowliest people.  
Colson's wise warning to Christian leaders bears repeating: "*Power is like saltwater; the more you drink the thirstier you get. The lure of power can separate the most resolute of Christians from the true nature of Christian leadership, which is service to others. It's difficult to stand on a pedestal and wash the feet of those below.*"
3. **MARK 10:35-45**: SACRIFICE, SERVICE, AND SUFFERING. In the most blatant display of selfish ambition and total disregard for the good of their ten colleagues, James and John ask Jesus to give them the two most prominent seats in His kingdom: "*Grant that we may sit in Your glory, one on Your right, and one on Your left.*" Their request immediately stirs bad feelings among the other apostles, as selfish ambition always does.

4. **MATTHEW 23:1-12**: THE HUMBLE SHALL BE EXALTED. No one understands religious pride like Jesus Christ does. In Matthew 23, Jesus exposes the awful pride, petty selfishness, self-superiority, legalism, and deception of religious hypocrites who love to exalt themselves.
- The religious leaders about whom Jesus spoke separated and exalted themselves above the people. They sought for themselves special titles, clothes, and treatment—the chief seats among their fellow men. They loved high-profile, public ministry. They loved the limelight and celebrity status. In marked contrast, Jesus prohibited His disciples from using honorific titles, calling one another Rabbi, exalting themselves in any way that would diminish their brotherly relationship, or usurping the unique place that Christ and the Father have over each believer.
5. **LUKE 22:24-27**: ONE WHO SERVES. As unbelievable as it may sound in light of Christ's clear and repeated teaching, the disciples again argued during the Passover meal as to which one of them was regarded as the greatest (Luke 22:24). Again, we witness our Lord patiently teaching them not to think and act like worldly leaders: "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who 'have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves" (Luke 22:25-27).
- Sadly, the same competitive, self-seeking spirit exhibited by the disciples is alive today. Perhaps its most common form is expressed by the question, "Who has the largest church?"
- "Who has grown the most this year?"
- "Why am I not been recognised as the most important leader here?"
- "Why am I not given the responsibility to preach in this conference?"
6. **JOHN 13:34,35**: LOVE. We are to love one another with the same intensity as Christ loved us.
- Jesus is the cornerstone and pioneer and head of the Church.
- Apostles and Prophets are the foundation of the church

We should follow their directions in terms of setting up a Leadership Structure that truly reflects their vision not our vision or convenience.

So, I propose a model of

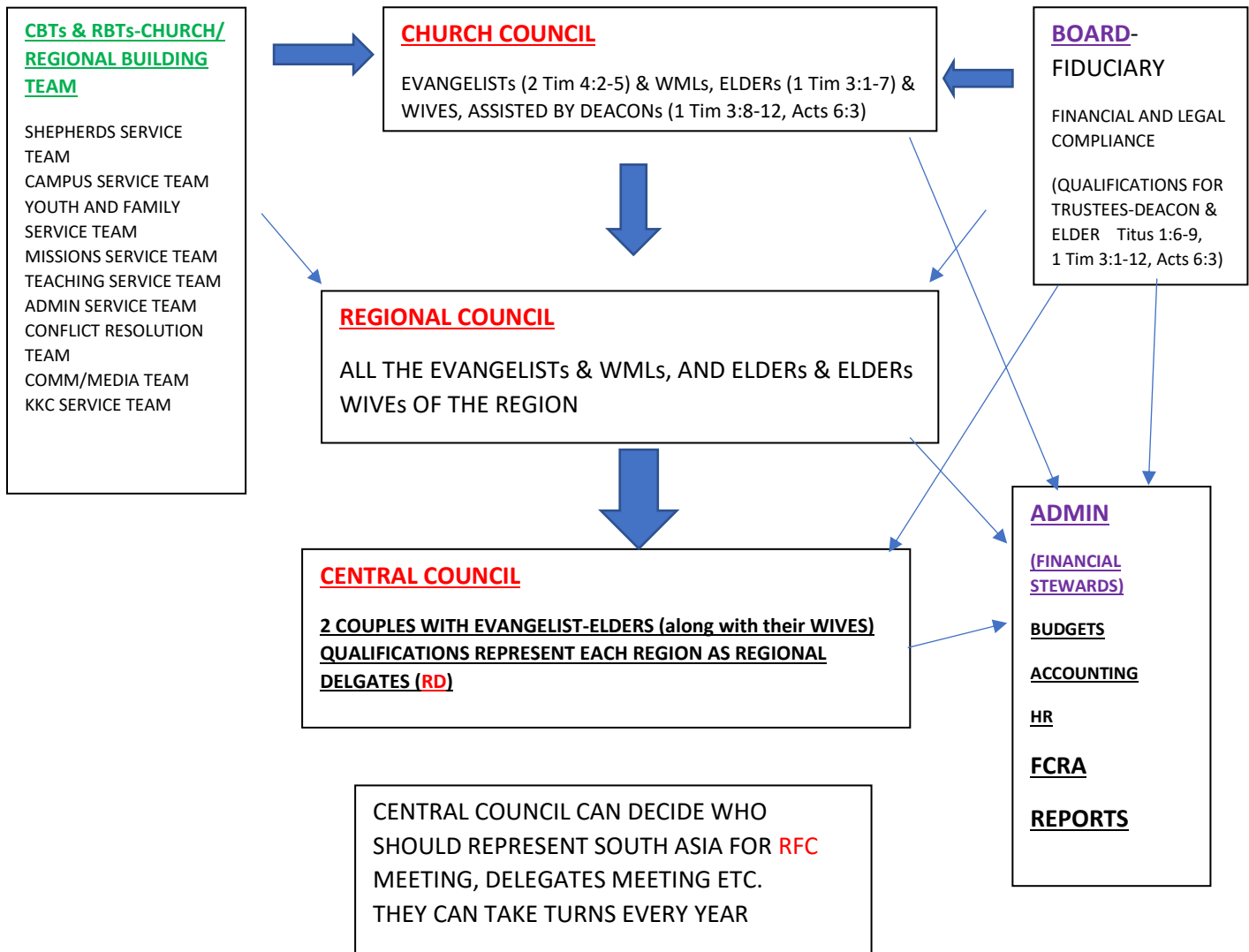
1. **PLURAL AND SHARED LEADERSHIP** AT ALL LEVELS OF CHURCH GOVERNANCE IN INDIA.
2. **QUALIFIED LEADERSHIP**- EVANGELISTS (1 & 2 TIMOTHY), ELDERS (1 TIM 3:1-7, TITUS 1:6-9, 1 PETER 5:2-3), DEACONS (1 TIMOTHY 3:8-12)
3. **SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

## 5. PROPOSED LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE FOR INDIAN CHURCH OF CHRIST

### **Q1. What is the Present Leadership we have in Indian Churches?**

1. Evangelists/WML-22 Couples
2. Interns-74
3. Elders-3 couples only in Bangalore
4. Administrators-15
5. SOM-
6. Consultants-55
7. Bi-vocational-

### **Q2. Proposed New Leadership Structure? A PLURAL AND SHARED LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS.**



### **Q3. What is CHURCH COUNCIL and its Role?**

NT MODEL OF **PLURAL SHARED LEADERSHIP** CONSISTING OF EVANGELISTS & WIVES AND ELDERS (PASTOR-TEACHERS) & WIVES ASSISTED BY DEACONS rather than SINGLE EVANGELIST LEAD CHURCHES

#### **ROLE & FUNCTION-**

Lead the Church

Raise Evangelists & WMLs for Mission Work

Raise Elders for Pastoral and Teaching service.

Help Raise CBTs (Church Building Teams)

Unity of Region along with other Church Councils in the Region.

Help Raise RBTs along with other Church Councils in the Region.

Decide on Salary Increments, Transfers, Hiring and Letting Go in the Church in consultation with Admin and Board (have to justify to them legally and financially)

Prepare Vision, Goals, Plans reflecting the Vision, Budgets and present it to the Board through the Admin for Ratification and Approval.

Help the Admin to send periodic reports for compliance to the Board.

### **Q4. How Many Regions do we have?**

Presently we have 4 Regions.

1. West Region
2. North & East Region
3. Kerala & Tamil Nadu Region
4. Karnataka, Hyderabad & Telangana Region, GC Churches.

### **Q5. Will there be more Region's in future?**

Regional Councils can decide. The decision should be discussed among the Church Councils and Regional Council of the Region. The benefits discussed and deliberated and critiqued properly and then decision made.

### **Q6. Who will lead each of the Regions?**

Each region will form a **REGIONAL COUNCIL** consisting of Evangelists/WMLs and Elders of the Region and their wives. **REGIONAL COUNCIL WILL LEAD THE REGION.**

### **Q7. What is the REGIONAL COUNCIL & its ROLE?**

LEAD THE REGION

Unity of Region along with other Church Councils in the Region.

Help Raise RBTs along with other Church Councils in the Region.

Decide on Salary Increments, Transfers, Hiring and Letting Go in the Church in consultation with Admin and Board (have to justify to them legally and financially)

Prepare Vision for REGION, Plans reflecting the Vision, Programs for the Region, Budgets for the same and present it to the Board through the Regional Admin for Ratification and Approval.

Organizing Regional Events

Unity of the region and with the rest of the brotherhood in South Asia and ICOC churches

Decide on Staff Transfers Intra Region, Salary Increments, Hiring and Letting Go in the Region in consultation with Admin and Board (Regional Council have to justify

legally and financially)

CONNECT WITH DONOR CHURCHES AND HAVE MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS.

**Q8. Who will be the REGIONAL DELEGATE in Central Council?**

- A. Two couples commended and chosen by the Regional Council will represent the region.
- B. They should have Evangelist-Elder qualifications (Qualifications-1 Tim 3:1-7,2 Timothy 4:2,5))
- C. Must be willing to serve as a REGIONAL DELEGATE as an additional responsibility apart from their local church responsibility.

**Q9. Is the RD position a life time position?**

A. The RDs will serve a 3 years term. After 3 years, the new RDs will be chosen by their REGIONAL COUNCIL for a 3 year term. An RD can serve in consecutive terms as seen fit by the REGIONAL COUNCIL.

**Q 10. ROLE OF RDs?**

**Apart from Leading their own churches they should be willing to do the following.**

Along with Regional council prepare annual and long-term goals for the region. Present to the board the above goals and the financial requirements to get approved. Along with the central council come out with plans/budgets & dates all India events. In collaboration with the regional council plan out staff related events, hiring, missions.

Ensure that financial requirements are prepared by Regional admin and empower them to maintain relevant reports pertaining to Events are properly recorded from time to time for compliance.

Attend to conflicts arise out of church governance pertaining to ministry /admin staff. Forge unity in the region.

Monitor progress in regional churches and come out with plans for training and development

Board policies are brought to the notice of regional council and discussed without taking unilateral decisions.

Maintain high level of transparency and integrity in the allocation of funds and also ensure proper allocation of funds in regional churches.

**Q 11. Is there a limit on how many times a person can serve as RD?**

A. There is no limit on how many times a person can serve as RD as long as he is chosen by the REGIONAL COUNCIL & willing to serve.

**Q12. How is the CENTRAL COUNCIL formed?**

Two RDs from each region will represent their region in **CENTRAL COUNCIL**

### **Q13. What is the CHURCH/REGION BUILDING TEAM(CBT & RBT) and its role ?**

#### **Each CHURCH/REGION will form a CHURCH/Region Building**

**Team[C/RBT]** who will oversee each of these following teams to serve and to build these various ministries in their respective church & region. Each of the following teams will have a shepherding person or couple who will form their respective teams and for serve a 3 year term.

- Shepherds Service Team
- Campus Service Team
- Youth & Family Service Team
- Singles Service Team
- Missions Service Team
- Teaching Service Team
- Admin Service Team
- Communication/Media Service Team
- Conflict Resolution Team
- KKC Service Team

### **Q14. Who can be a part of the CHURCH / REGION BUILDING TEAM [RBT]?**

A. The CHURCH/Region Building Team will consists of members who can serve the special ministry or service. They could be any one who is willing to serve and could be full time or non full-time lead by Deacons/Elders/Evangelists.

### **Q15. Who will disciple the RDs?**

The RDs should submit to the influence and discipling of their Church Council (Evg and Elders) in their particular church, Regional Council(**their Region**) and the Central Council.

**There should be many connections among the RDs and other Leaders which allows for mutual submission and Unity.**

**LEADERSHIP OF ANY LEVELS THE MORE THE RESPONSIBILITY THE MORE THEY SHOULD BE SCRUTINIZED WHETHER THEY ARE OVER BEARING/UNYIELDING/SELF WILLED.**

### **Q16. Role of the Central Council?**

Organizing All India Events- SALC, AIYC, AICC, Next gen, etc.

Consult on Staff Transfers Inter Region.

Decide on who will represent SA for Delegates meetings.

Choosing RFC.

Strengthening and Building up the South Asian Churches with the help of Regional Councils and the RBTs to ensure churches in the region grow.

Unity of the region and with the rest of the brotherhood in South Asia and ICOC churches

**EVANGELIZATION OF INDIA/SOUTH ASIA.**

MAKE AND COLLABORATE ON GOALS, PLANS, BUDGETS FOR MISSIONS AND ALL

INDIA EVENTS PRESENT IT TO THE BOARD FOR CONSULTATION.  
 All Financial and Legal Matters are to be in consultation with Board and Admin.  
 HAVING MULTIPLE CONNECTIONS WITH DONOR AND MENTORING CHURCHES.  
 DOCUMENT AND MAINTAIN MINUTES OF ALL THEIR MEETINGS AND SHARE IT WITH  
 REGIONAL AND CHURCH COUNCILS.

### **Q 17. Qualifications for Trustees?**

- A) START WITH ATLEAST DEACONS QUALIFICATIONS
- B) THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND STANDING MEMBERS SHOULD EVENTUALLY BE ELDERS.
- C) FINANCIAL AND LEGAL ACUMEN

### **Q 18. Tenure for Trustees?**

- a) **5 years. Replaced in a phased manner so that new comers can be trained by existing members.**

### **Q 19. Role of BOARD OF TRUSTEES?**

- A) FIDUCIARY
  - **fiduciary**(n.) **Synonyms:** trustee, depositary.

**Fiduciary duty** is a legal **obligation** of the highest degree for one party to act in the best interest of another.
- B) HELP SET UP THE NEW TRUSTS. AND RAISE UP NEW TRUSTEES, TRAIN THEM AND SHEPHERD THEM.
- C) FINANCIAL AND LEGAL OVERSIGHT

### **Q 20. ECCLESIASTICAL OVERSIGHT**

NT MODEL OF **PLURAL & SHARED LEADERSHIP** CONSISTING OF EVANGELIST AND ELDERS (PASTOR TEACHERS) ASSISTED BY DEACONS.

### **Q 21. WHO WILL THE ADMINISTRATOR REPORT TO?**

- A) Administrator to Church Council and Regional Administrator.
- B) Regional Administrator to Regional Council and Central Administrator
- C) Central Administrator to Central Council and Board

### **Q 22. INTERNS & CONSULTANTS?**

All New Internships for Full Time Workers should be less than **TWO** years.  
 They should be either appointed to Ecclesiastical Roles or let go as they may not have the gifts for the same.



For the existing older Interns there are 74 of them please find a suitable Designation ASAP if they are older than 2 years. No company or organization gives internships for so long.

For Consultants unless they have other employments sources to be hired on payroll so that they can receive benefits of employment- MEDICAL INSURANCE, PF, GRATUITY, ANNUITY, etc.

### **Q 23. WHO CAN BE RFC?**

**AMONG THE RDs someone can represent the SOUTH ASIA region taking turns every year.**

### **Q 24. RECOMMENDATION FOR UNITY**

**WORK HARD AT UNITING AND WIN ONE ANOTHER BASED ON MATTHEW 18:15-20.**

**AT THE END OF IT LET THE LORD'S BODY BE CHARACTERIZED AND RECOGNISED**

**BY THESE  
PATIENCE**

**KINDNESS**

**LISTENING &  
UNDERSTANDING**

**SERVICE THAT PROTECTS**

**RELATIONSHIPS**

**TRUST AS THE FOUNDATION**

**AND NOT BY THESE  
HIERARCHY**

**HARSHNESS**

**QUICK FIXES**

**SERVICE TO CONTROL**

**PROCESS**

**STRUCTURE AS FOUNDATION**

### **John 13:34-35**

*<sup>34</sup> "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

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